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SC # 0121/60

10 FEB 1960

[redacted] Deputy Director/Plans

ATTENTION: Chief, FI

SUBJECT: Supply of Chinese Communist Troops in Tibet by Airlift

REFERENCE: CIA Paper on Impact of the Tibetan Campaign on the Economy of Communist China, 1 February 1960

1. This memorandum is with further reference to the section on Supply of Troops in Tibet by Airlift contained in the reference paper.

2. Our estimate of the capability of an airlift contained in the reference paper was not intended to be definitive, but was calculated chiefly for the purpose of obtaining some indication of the magnitude of the aviation fuel requirement for the Tibetan Campaign under the stated assumptions. We have reexamined our information bearing on this subject since submitting the paper, however, and have produced what we believe to be a more reliable estimate.

3. On the assumption that all transport type aircraft assigned to the Chinese Communist Air Force, except the 125 Li-2's, are used in an airlift to Tibet, and that each aircraft operates 10 trips each month, the daily airlift capability would be 200 short tons instead of the 250 short tons contained in the reference paper. Since there appears to be considerable doubt that the Li-2's could be utilized in such an operation, except as a measure of desperation, we have eliminated them completely in our revised calculation. However, more precise data have required that we reduce downward the payload of the C-46's and increase slightly the payload of the Li-14's. Further refinement of the airlift analysis, by the elimination of the Li-2's, means, however, that the aviation fuel requirement would be reduced by more than one-third. Thus we believe that the refinement further substantiates our original estimate that the operation of an airlift would have impact of only modest proportions on the economy.

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4. Incidentally, our revised estimate does not agree with the daily airlift capability of 136 tons which was supplied to you by the Acting Chief, DDP-M/P, and which a member of your staff permitted us to review. The numbers and types of aircraft estimated to be available are the same in both estimates except that we would now exclude the Il-14's. There are basic differences, however, in estimates of the net payload capacity and of the weight of the fuel required for the various types of aircraft as they relate to the total lift capacities of the aircraft and to the flight distances necessary for an airlift of the type assumed in the reference paper. For example, the DDP estimate that the C-46 type aircraft has a net payload of 6,870 pounds and a fuel requirement of 5,400 pounds. Our estimate provides a net payload of 11,000 pounds with a fuel requirement of 7,000 pounds for the same type aircraft. For the Il-14 aircraft, the DDP estimates a net payload of 1,135 pounds and a fuel requirement of 1,025 pounds, but our estimate provides a net payload of 4,000 pounds and a fuel requirement of 5,760 pounds. These differences in estimates of performance and requirements lead to the rather substantial differences in conclusions with respect to the magnitude of the tonnage of supplies that can be moved by an airlift.

5. We would be pleased to meet with the working level of DDP and OSR to come to a common understanding of the capabilities and requirements of the various types of aircraft that may be involved in this problem, and thus provide the basis for an agreed estimate of an airlift capability. If you think an agreed estimate would be worth while for your purposes, please have the appropriate member of your staff contact [redacted] 25X1A9a on extension 2745.

25X1A9a

[redacted]

25X1A9a

Acting Assistant Director
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25X1A9a OSR/S/ER: [redacted] ldr/2745 (9 Feb 60)

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REMARKS:

Dr. Guthe asked me to rewrite the final paragraph of the previous memo drafted on this subject to present more detail on the differences in the DPD-DD/P and ORR airlift estimates. Thks

APPENDED DOCUMENT CONTAINS CODEWORD MATERIAL

Appended document contains classified information within the meaning of Section 798, Title 18, United States Code.

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